



✓ DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41)
FPO NEW YORK 09591-1729

IN REPLY REFER TO:
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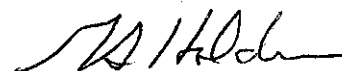
From: Commanding Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41)
To: Director, Naval History (OP-09BH)

Subj: 1988 SHIP'S HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C

Encl: (1) Command History for 1988

1. In accordance with requirements set forth in reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted for the period 1 January 1988 to 31 December 1988.


G. S. HOLDER

JANUARY

USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41) started the New Year by completing her second holiday leave period and preparing for her upcoming Material Inspection and Survey in February. On 4 January LSD 41 was notified that she had four days to load out supplies and recall the crew from leave. On 8 January WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway to embark elements of 4TH Marine Amphibious Brigade Detachment to participate in a Special Operations Exercise off Vieques Island, Puerto Rico. The transit lasted six days and LSD 41 offloaded from anchorage on the 14th. On 15 January LSD 41 pulled into Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas for a three day port visit and on 18 January left Charlotte Amalie and sailed into Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico. Later that day the Marines conducted a vehicle washdown and backloaded 4TH Marine Amphibious Brigade Detachment. In general, the trip south was used by all departments for maintenance, preservation and preparation for the Material Inspection and Survey. WHIDBEY ISLAND departed for Morehead City, North Carolina on the 20th and arrived there on the 24th, where she offloaded the Marines and got underway later that day for Little Creek, Virginia. In transit a gunnery exercise was conducted. At Cape Henry on 25 January LSD 41 launched the LCU's that had made the trip south and moored at Quaywall East, Little Creek at 1600. On the 26th she commenced her Pre-Material Inspection and Survey Maintenance Availability. WHIDBEY ISLAND concluded January in preparation for Material Inspection and Survey.

FEBRUARY

WHIDBEY ISLAND began February by continuing preparations for the Material Inspection and Survey. On 2 February the ship's Adopt-A-School volunteers participated in an awards ceremony at Bayside Junior High School in honor of the program. On the 5th LSD 41 got underway for sea trials and final preparations for Material Inspection and Survey. All evolutions were conducted, including a practice rehearsal for Material Inspection and Survey. 6 February found crewmembers making final checks of equipment, spaces, and other pertinent areas.

On 8 February LSD 41 commenced Material Inspection and Survey. LSD 41 was underway on 9 February for demonstrations, including an anchor test, a full power run, and Close-in Weapons System tracking exercises. Also, the ship turned 3 years old. LSD 41 continued Material Inspection and Survey on the 10th. WHIDBEY ISLAND officially celebrated her third birthday with a birthday dinner on the messdecks on 11 February. On 12 February LSD 41 rigged the dress ship lights and critiqued Material Inspection and Survey.

WHIDBEY ISLAND celebrated Washington's Birthday on the 15th with holiday routine. On 16 February the Helo Crash Crew commenced training in preparation for the upcoming flight deck survey. The ordnance standdown for the ship began on 19 February to prepare for pre-Phase Maintenance Availability ammunition offload. On the 23rd LSD 41 commenced her semi-annual Physical Readiness Test. On 24 February a class from the United States Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School took a familiarization tour of the ship. The crew completed the semi-annual Physical Readiness Test on the 26th.

On 27 February a U.S. Army Detachment from Fort Eustis visited onboard. The ship embarked 50 Bayside Junior High School students and faculty on the 29th for a transit to Chesapeake Light and back to "W" anchorage for an ammunition offload. The students and teachers were taken ashore by the ship's 50 foot utility boat.

MARCH

March began with the ammunition offload and fuel offload at Craney Island on 1 March. On 2 March the ship moored at Metro Machine Shipyard to commence her Phased Maintenance Availability. On 4 March Captain's Call and an awards ceremony were held on the flight deck. The Ventilation Assist Team arrived on the 7th. On 14 March the Commanding Officer and the Executive Officer began routine meetings with the shipyard Phased Maintenance Availability Coordinator. The Adopt-A-School volunteers from LSD 41 went to Bayside Junior High School on the afternoon of the 16th to begin a regularly scheduled weekly visit to the school. On 22 March the ship conducted Single Audio System training onboard and on 23 March the Adopt-A-School volunteers continued with the weekly visits. The next day, the 24th, the officers and chiefs of LSD 41 played the faculty of Bayside Junior High School in a basketball game. LSD 41 celebrated Easter on 27 March with an Easter Egg Hunt and a Pot Luck Dinner at the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek. And finally, on 30 March, the ship sent a ship's Platoon to USS Guam for the Change of Command Ceremony for Commander, Amphibious Squadron Four.

APRIL

WHIDBEY ISLAND continued her Phased Maintenance Availability at the beginning of April. On 6 April the prospective Executive Officer, Lieutenant Commander Michael P. Nowakowski reported aboard. At 1300, 13 April, Commander Holder held a command personnel inspection in service dress whites on the flight deck. On 14 April WHIDBEY ISLAND participated in its Adopt-A-School program at Bayside Junior High School. At 1215 on the 15th, Lieutenant Commander Michael P. Nowakowski assumed duties as Executive Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41).

Besides celebrating holiday routine on 24 April, LSD 41 sailors participated in the 25-kilometer Teamwalk '88 to raise money for March of Dimes. On 25 April LSD 41 conducted junior officer Aviation Surface Warfare training at Fleet Aviation Surface Warfare Training Center, U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

At 0705, 27 April, an awards ceremony was held on the ship's flight deck, and later that day crewmembers performed volunteer work at Bayside Junior High School. And finally, on the 29th, WHIDBEY ISLAND commenced Hurricane Ursula exercise.

MAY

WHIDBEY ISLAND continued Hurricane Ursula Exercise at the beginning of May. On 1 May the ship commenced National Physical Readiness and Sports Month and on the 2nd LSD 41 commenced Asian Pacific Heritage Week. On 3 May the officers and chiefs of WHIDBEY ISLAND played basketball against the faculty of Bayside Junior High School as part of the ship's ongoing Adopt-A-School program. The next day, 4 May, the ship commenced her Navy Relief Fund Raising Campaign, while volunteers from the ship performed various services at Bayside Junior High School later in the afternoon. On the 5th Capt Larry L. Lubbs, Commander, Amphibious Squadron TEN, conducted a safety walk-thru of the ship. Later that afternoon Adopt-A-School volunteers supported their school at the Bayside Junior High School versus Plaza Junior High School track meet. LSD 41 completed Hurricane Ursula Exercise on 6 May.

The crew celebrated the last month in the shipyard with a ship's picnic at the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek on 7 May. The following day, 8 May, everyone celebrated Sunday and Mother's Day with holiday routine. On the 9th the ship conducted dock trials, followed by a Fast Cruise on 10 and 11 May. During the fast cruise the ship held General Quarters and other training. After a successful sea trial LSD-41 moored at Quaywall East, Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek on 13 May, thus completing her two-and-a-half month Phase Maintenance Availability.

On the 15th LSD 41 celebrated Armed Forces Day with holiday routine. Adopt-A-School volunteers again participated in tutoring and counseling the students of Bayside Junior High School on 18 May. On the 25th the captain held an awards ceremony on the flight deck to recognize the outstanding achievements of the crew for the previous months. From 27 to 29 May Troop 716 of The Boy Scouts of America from Washington, D.C. embarked on the ship for a weekend of fun, tours and relaxation. On 30 May, LSD 41 celebrated Memorial Day with holiday routine. And finally, on the 31st, Engineering Mobile Training Team arrived for a regularly scheduled visit.

JUNE

WHIDBEY ISLAND opened June by continuing Engineering Mobile Training Team training which concluded on the 3rd. At 1300, 6 June, the ship commenced Combined Inport Training Exercise. At 2000, 8 June, Commander Holder and Adopt-A-School volunteers attended the graduation ceremony for the senior class of Bayside Junior High School, where various awards were presented to the students and the volunteers.

On 9 June sailors, families and friends enjoyed a Dependent's Cruise from Little Creek to Yorktown, Virginia where the dependents were debarked and the crew mustered for a working party to onload ammunition. WHIDBEY ISLAND departed Yorktown the following day and arrived in Little Creek at 1330. On 11 June various crewmembers attended the Tidewater Surface Force Ball at the Virginia Beach Pavillion. LSD 41 commenced midshipman training on the 13th when she embarked 26 midshipman from universities around the country. On 14 June 13 Norwegian Officers toured the ship as part of their annual orientation visit with the U.S. Marine Corps. On the same day WHIDBEY ISLAND, in conjunction with Naval Air Test Center, commenced helicopter Dynamic Interface testing. On 15 June the ship continued helicopter testing with Naval Air Test Center personnel embarked. The testing included day and night landings to develop wind landing and take off envelopes for various types of helicopters on LSD 41 class ships.

At 0530 WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted an underway replenishment with USNS PAWCATUCK. At 0930 LSD 41 rendezvoused and embarked Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) from Assault Craft Unit Four. At 1030 Colonel Bartels, Commanding Officer, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, arrived by helicopter to visit the ship. On 16 June the ship again continued Dynamic Interface testing. At 1300 the LCACS departed. Also, LSD 41 and Naval Air Test Center completed Dynamic Interface testing, thus expanding the general launch recovery envelopes for UH-1N (HUEY) and AH-1T (COBRA) helicopters operating aboard LSD 41 class ships.

On 17 June WHIDBEY ISLAND anchored at Little Creek Anchorage 10, but by 1900 she was underway again for engineering training evolutions in the Virginia Capes Operations area. On the 18th there was an awards and frocking ceremony on the flight deck. Afterward, LSD 41 conducted well deck operations with Assault Craft Unit Two and by 1500 was moored at Quaywall East, Little Creek. After a weekend off, LSD 41 was underway again at 0800, 20 June, for further training in preparation for upcoming Interim Refresher Training in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The ship conducted basic engineering casualty control exercises, main space fire drills, flight quarters, and deck landing qualifications. The next day the ship added Landing Craft Air Cushion operations to its list of training evolutions for the week. On 22 June the ship conducted a shipwide Damage Control standdown from 0800 - 2100 designed to improve material deficiency correction, repair locker training, and at sea fire fighting techniques.

On 23 June the ship conducted a Close-In Weapons System firing exercise and at 1600 practiced a precision anchorage at Little Creek Anchorage 7 in time to arrive by 1800 at Pier 3, Naval Station Norfolk for hull cleaning.

From the 24th to the 30th WHIDBEY ISLAND remained at Naval Station Norfolk, commencing its hull cleaning on 27 June and receiving a Readiness Support Group visit to the ship on 28 June.

JULY

WHIDBEY ISLAND shifted berths on the first day of July, moving from Berth 2, Pier 3 to Berth 6, Pier 4 at 1700. The ship still continued her inport daily routine while undergoing hull cleaning at the beginning of July. LSD 41 celebrated the Fourth of July, Independence Day, with holiday routine. After completing her hull cleaning, WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway at 0730 on 5 July and conducted a degaussing run during her return to Little Creek. At 1100 she rendezvoused with Units of Assault Craft Unit Four and commenced well deck operations that lasted into the evening. At 2145 LSD 41 and Assault Craft Unit Four conducted a simulated over-the-horizon assault. On the 6th, John Paul Jones's Birthday, the ship was at anchorage by 0700. By 1700 she had returned to Little Creek. On 8 July Commander Holder conducted a command personnel inspection in service dress whites on the ship's flight deck.

During the next week WHIDBEY ISLAND made final preparations and checks for her Interim Refresher Training in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. On 14 July, at 0800, LSD 41 was underway for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, with U.S. Coast Guard District Five Law Enforcement Detachment embarked for the transit to the Caribbean. The next morning the ship conducted an underway replenishment with USNS TRUCKEE. Later that evening the ship conducted anti-mine warfare exercises. On the morning of the 16th the captain conducted a frocking ceremony. From 0900 to 1100 the ship streamed the newly installed anti-torpedo system, and later on that day she again conducted anti-mine warfare exercises while enroute to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Enroute to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on 18 July, WHIDBEY ISLAND participated in Law Enforcement Operations in the Caribbean Sea. While sailing south through the Crooked Island Passage, 90 miles off the northeast coast of Cuba, LSD 41 encountered refugees from Haiti attempting to sail to Miami, Florida. After receiving approval from Commander, U.S. Coast Guard District Seven, Miami, the refugees were embarked and their unseaworthy sailing vessel was sunk in order to prevent a hazard to navigation. Later the same night, WHIDBEY ISLAND rendezvoused with U.S. Coast Guard Cutter CHASE, 23 miles north of Punta Maisi, Cuba, to transfer custody of the refugees to the Coast Guard, for further transfer to Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

By 1030 on 19 July WHIDBEY ISLAND was moored pierside in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. She offloaded vehicles and small boats and refueled, and later that day embarked 16 Midshipman for training. On the 20th LSD 41 commenced Interim Refresher Training. On 21 July she continued Interim Refresher Training, scoring a perfect 100 on her first Operational Readiness Exercise, a simulated helicopter crash on deck. WHIDBEY ISLAND remained inport for a few days and at 0800 on 23 July commenced damage control inport drills. At 0600, 25 July, she was again underway to continue Interim Refresher Training and during the morning conducted combat systems training and anti-mine warfare exercises. In the afternoon a Close-In Weapons System Prefire Aim Calibration Firing, more combat systems training, and a precision anchorage at 1700 were conducted.

At 0700 on the 26th LSD 41 was underway for a low visibility piloting drill, a swept channel drill and a Condition I General Quarters Exercise. At 1300 she conducted a Vertical Replenishment Exercise. WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway on 27 July to continue training and on the 28th, Rear Admiral Chabot, Inspector General, Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, arrived with Fleet Training Group inspectors to observe ship's training progress. Battle dressing station watchstanders received a 98 in their graded drill. At 1400 Rear Admiral Chabot departed the ship. On 29 July LSD 41 was underway for a Close-In Weapons System Prefire Aim Calibration Gunnery Exercise in the afternoon. At 1730 she again conducted a precision anchorage. On 30 July she was underway to continue Interim Refresher Training and at 0900 conducted a 20 MM gun shoot. At 1600 she moored pierside. On the 31st LSD 41 was inport to hold damage control inport emergency fire fighting drills and rescue and assistance drills.

AUGUST

WHIDBEY ISLAND began August underway continuing Interim Refresher Training. On the 2nd the ship was again underway for Interim Refresher Training. At 0700 she conducted a 20 MM familiarization firing. At 1430 she held a precision anchorage, and by 1530 she was moored pierside. On 3 and 4 August she continued Interim Refresher Training underway. On 5 August LSD 41 was moored pierside by 1300 to conduct damage control inport drills. By 1900 she was underway again to continue Interim Refresher Training. On 6 August she continued Interim Refresher Training and by 1000, 7 August, moored pierside. At 0500 on the 8th WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway. That afternoon a refueling at sea, an arms transfer, and an emergency breakaway exercise were conducted. By 0530, 9 August, WHIDBEY ISLAND was at anchorage and later moored pierside. On 10 August, at 1130, the ship was underway to complete Interim Refresher Training.

On the 11th LSD 41 completed Interim Refresher Training. The crew scored high marks on all of its inport drills, ranging from 95 to 100. They also conducted 10 main space fire drills in four days, passing all of them. During General Quarters, the crew scored 88 on its first "Zebra" check. Finally, the ship's signalmen performed semaphore, flag hoist, flashing light, and challenge and reply procedures, setting a Guantanamo Bay record of 96.

On the evening of 11 August WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway for Panama City, Florida. On 13 August the ship celebrated the hard work of the past few weeks with a steel beach picnic on the ship's flight deck. After a couple of days of rest in Panama City, Florida, the ship unloaded Landing Craft Air Cushion 12 and was underway for Little Creek, Virginia on the 16th. On 19 August the ship offloaded Landing Craft Air Cushion 12 and returned to homeport by 1700. On 20 August Rear Admiral Whisler and the Assistant Secretary General of NATO arrived for a Landing Craft Air Cushion and ship orientation tour.

On 22 August the ship conducted a damage control equipment inspection and an engineering administration review. On the 23rd the ship was again underway for engineering administration review and a visit by Diesel Mobile Training Team. The ship completed Diesel Mobile Training Team visit and moored pierside at 1400 on 26 August. After a weekend inport LSD 41 was underway on the 29th to commence preparations for Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE). LSD 41 remained underway for OPPE preparations the whole week. On 30 August Captain Larry L. Lubbs, Commander, Amphibious Squadron TEN, visited the ship for a Pre-OPPE visit. On 31 August the ship continued Operational Propulsion Plant Examination preparations.

SEPTEMBER

On 1 September Commander, Amphibious Squadron TEN departed after completing his Pre-OPPE visit. WHIDBEY ISLAND continued OPPE preparations and on 2 September moored pierside at Little Creek. On the 3rd LSD 41 conducted a pierside burial ceremony for a retired Naval Officer. The ship celebrated Labor Day, 5 September, with holiday routine. On 6 September the ship was underway to continue OPPE preparations and commence bildge cleaning. LSD 41 continued OPPE preparations while underway during the week. At 0845, 9 September, all hands buried the dead. Later in the morning the ship conducted a high power demonstration, and by 1300 was moored pierside at Quaywall East. At 1600 the ship was again underway to anchorage. LSD 41 remained at anchorage throughout the weekend.

On 12 September LSD 41 commenced OPPE. At 1400 Commander, Amphibious Squadron TEN arrived. On the 13th LSD 41 successfully completed OPPE, returning to homeport the same day, after being certified for 24 months. On 14 September the ship commenced Commander, Amphibious Squadron TWO troop habitability inspection. On 16 September LSD 41 rigged the dress ship lights in honor of National Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Day.

On 17 September Troop 891 of The Boy Scouts of America were greeted onboard by Vice Admiral J. S. Donnell III, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. Throughout the weekend the Boy Scouts participated in tours, film viewing, and living aboard ship. The Boy Scouts departed on the 18th.

On 19 September WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway again to conduct helicopter testing with Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland. At the same time she also commenced Scientists to Sea program, in conjunction with Naval Surface Weapons Center, Dahlgren, Virginia. Later in the day the ship rendezvoused with Assault Craft Unit Four units to conduct Landing Craft Air Cushion operations. Throughout the week LSD 41 continued helicopter testing, Scientist to Sea program, and Landing Craft Air Cushion operations with Assault Craft Unit Four. WHIDBEY ISLAND returned to port On 23 September. Later that day Commander, Amphibious Squadron TEN officially presented the captain and crew of LSD 41 with the Battle Efficiency Award and Top Gator Award for the competitive cycle ending 31 March 1988.

On the 26th LSD 41 commenced her semi-annual Physical Readiness Test, Combat Systems Readiness Review, and Auxiliary Systems Readiness Review. She completed all three evolutions on 30 September.

OCTOBER

WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway on 3 October for further training. In the morning the ship conducted anti-ship attacks by Landing Craft Air Cushion and tactical maneuvering drills. In the afternoon she conducted Close-In Weapons System detect to engage exercises, threat exercises, and chaff firing. On the evening of the 4th LSD 41 and Assault Craft Unit Four conducted a night over-the-horizon practice assault. Early in the morning of 6 October WHIDBEY ISLAND rendezvoused with USS AUSTIN for training. Later that day the ship conducted an underway replenishment with USNS TRUCKEE. On the morning of 7 October LSD 41 held General Quarters training, and by 1300 was moored at Quaywall East, Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia.

LSD 41 celebrated Columbus Day by rigging the ship with dress lights and commencing holiday routine. On the 11th the ship commenced a diesel inspection, a boiler inspection, a ship propulsion systems on-site calibration/alignment and an electrical cableway inspection. These inspections lasted until 27 October.

On 13 October WHIDBEY ISLAND celebrated the United States Navy's 213th birthday by rigging the ship's dress lights and with a cake cutting ceremony on the messdecks. On 14 October Commander Holder held a command personnel inspection in service dress blues. Afterwards, there was an awards ceremony on the ship's flight deck. On 17 October the ship commenced her annual fire hose hydro-testing and a Communications Assist Team visit. On the 18th LSD 41 commenced her Supply Management Inspection. That afternoon there was a pre-deployment seminar on the USS GUADALCANAL for Marine Amphibious Readiness Group 1-89.

On 24 October LSD 41 onloaded Assault Craft Unit Four equipment in preparation for Marine Amphibious Readiness Group 1-89 work-ups. On 25 October LSD 41 commenced a Personnel and Administration Assistance Team Atlantic (PAATLANT) visit for Administration, Personnel, and Disbursing Departments. The ship also onloaded Special Warfare equipment that day in preparation for Marine Amphibious Readiness Group 1-89 work-ups. The ship continued the Personnel and Administration Assistance Team Atlantic visit on the 26th and the 27th, completing the assist visit on 28 October. On the 28th the ship was underway for sea trials, conducting General Quarters in the morning and returning to homeport by 1600. On 31 October the advance party for the United States Marine Corps arrived onboard.

NOVEMBER

WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway for Marine Amphibious Readiness Group 1-89 work-ups on 1 November. At anchor that day the ship unloaded ammunition. On the 2nd the ship sailed toward Morehead City, North Carolina. Also that day, LSD 41 recovered elements of Assault Craft Unit Four. On the morning of 3 November WHIDBEY ISLAND arrived off Morehead City. After launching the Landing Craft Air Cushion the ship moored pierside in Morehead City to commence onload of Marine Corps personnel, vehicles, and cargo. After completing the onload, the ship was underway at 1630 for Landing Craft Air Cushion operations.

On 4 November the ship set Condition III steaming and conducted General Quarters and abandon ship drills. The ship went to anchorage on the 5th and conducted a Non-combatant Evacuation Operation walk-thru drill and a mass casualty walk-thru drill. The ship completed her backload in the afternoon and inserted the Sea Air Land Forces later that night. At 2100 the ship got underway for further night training with other ships in the Marine Amphibious Readiness Group. LSD 41 anchored again the following morning and conducted a mass casualty drill and a chemical, biological, radiological warfare drill while at General Quarters. By 1700 that day she had completed the backload. Later that evening the ship rigged a deceptive lighting display. Just before midnight the ship conducted visual signalling drills.

On 7 November the ship conducted a mass casualty drill in conjunction with the Non-combatant Evacuation Operation. At 1800 the ship again rigged a deceptive lighting display. By 2000 the ship sortied for night steaming exercises. On 8 November LSD 41 set Condition III steaming. On the 9th WHIDBEY ISLAND launched the Landing Craft Air Cushions for simulated attacks on the USS ROOSEVELT Carrier Battle Group. Later that day the ship rendezvoused with the Carrier Battle Group. On 10 November WHIDBEY ISLAND celebrated the 213th birthday of the United States Marine Corps with a ceremony and cake cutting on the messdecks. On 11 November the ship honored Veteran's Day and detached from the Carrier Battle Group. The ship conducted more training on the 12th and on the 13th rendezvoused with USS KALAMAZOO for an underway replenishment. Later that day the ship moored pierside at Naval Station, Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico.

LSD 41 was underway the next day for training. On 17 November the ship conducted a chemical, biological, radiological drill while at General Quarters. The next day, 18 November, the ship participated in a war at sea exercise and arrived off Onslow Bay, North Carolina. WHIDBEY ISLAND continued Marine Amphibious Readiness Group 1-89 work-ups for the next few days and on 21 November commenced her offload in Morehead City. Upon completion of the offload LSD 41 was underway for Norfolk, Virginia. On the 23rd the ship arrived at Naval Station Norfolk for hull cleaning. WHIDBEY ISLAND celebrated Thanksgiving, 24 November, with holiday routine and a Thanksgiving Dinner on the messdecks.

On 28 November LSD 41 commenced hull cleaning. On 29 November the captain held an awards ceremony in the ship's well deck. That night the ship held a pre-deployment seminar with Navy Family Services Center for couples in the R.K. Turner Room at the Naval Amphibious School, Little Creek. On the 30th LSD 41 commenced her first holiday leave period for the Pre-Overseas Movement period.

DECEMBER

WHIDBEY ISLAND began December continuing her first holiday leave period. On 3 December the ship's crew celebrated with a Christmas party held at the Cavallier Hotel, Virginia Beach, Virginia. LSD 41 continued making preparations for Marine Amphibious Readiness Group 1-89 deployment over the next few weeks. On the 10th the United States Marine Corps held open house on the ship. On 11 December the ship held her children's Christmas Party at the Carper Apartment's Recreation Center. On 13 December LSD 41 completed her first holiday leave period. With everyone onboard on the 14th, the ship departed Naval Station Norfolk at 0900 and moored at Quaywall East, Little Creek at 1600, in time to commence her second holiday leave period. Later that evening the ship held the children's pre-deployment family meal and brief on the messdecks.

On 20 December the officers and chiefs of LSD 41 played basketball against the faculty of Bayside Junior High School in recognition of the ship's ongoing Adopt-A-School program. The following morning there was an Adopt-A-School breakfast, and that afternoon an Ombudsman luncheon was held in the wardroom. The ship rigged a lighting display in preparation for Christmas. LSD 41 celebrated Christmas with holiday routine and a Christmas Dinner on the messdecks. On 26 December the ship celebrated holiday routine. On 27 December the advance party of the United States Marine Corps embarked in preparation for Marine Amphibious

Readiness Group 1-89 deployment. The ship's second holiday leave period ended on the 28th. That same day the ship held a provisions onload.

On 30 December WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway for Marine Amphibious Readiness Group 1-89 deployment, her second major deployment and the maiden voyage of the Navy's new Landing Craft Air Cushion to the Mediterranean. In the morning the ship onloaded the Landing Craft Air Cushions and conducted a Close-In Weapons System firing. On the 31st LSD 41 moored pierside in Morehead City, North Carolina to commence onload of Marine Corps personnel, equipment, and other provisions. At 1630, 31 December, LSD 41 sortied Morehead City in company with the USS GUADALCANAL, USS AUSTIN, USS NEWPORT and USS SPARTANBURG COUNTY enroute to the Mediterranean Sea.